
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1952 2nd Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	LeDroit Park Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
		<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Review
Meeting Date:	December 17, 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	20-168	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The owner, Martin Hardy, seeks concept review to add a third story and front bay to the two-story house at 1952 2nd Street NW in the LeDroit Park Historic District. The concept also includes a new 16-foot tall garage. The existing building does not contribute to the historic district. Plans were prepared by W+W Architecture.

Property Description and Context

The existing house at 1952 2nd Street NW was built in 1936 which is outside the period of significance of the historic district. It is two-stories tall with an unornamented brick flat front façade. It stands between two rows of distinctly different forms of houses to the north is a short row of projecting bay rowhouses built in 1897 that sit close to the front property line. To the south is a long row of porch front rowhouses built in 1918 that are set back from the front property line.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to add a third floor the full length of the building, add a projecting bay to the front façade, extend the rear of the building 16 feet and build a new garage at the rear of the lot.

Adding a third floor and front bay would effectively transform the building into a new projecting bay rowhouse with a ubiquitous form. The projecting bay would be two stories tall and faced with large areas of triple ganged windows at each floor. The top of the bay would provide a walk-out balcony to the new third floor. The new floor would extend brick for half its height before transitioning into standing-seam metal mansard roof. Several lines of ornamental stringcourse coordinated with window sills and heads would stretch across the front façade and turn the corner onto the fenestrated side elevation of the house.

At the rear, the addition would align with the rear wall of the houses to the north and present a windowless smooth panel board elevation to the houses to the south. The rear elevation would be spanned by gallery porches at the second and third floor. The garage would be 16 feet tall at the alley with a nearly flat roof pitched slightly up away from the alley. The alley façade would have two windows above a full-width garage door set in clapboard siding.

Evaluation

While the applicant proposes to retain some of the existing building, the amount of alteration to the existing building means the project is better evaluated as new construction. The concept—especially in conjunction with the rowhouses to the north which it is trying to emulate--presents

a rowhouse form fundamentally compatible with the historic district. Only a few small details are worth special attention from the Board.

The proportions, dimensions and roof form of the front façade are arranged compatibly. The amount of glazing on the front of the bay is large as a proportion of the bay and would be brought into a more compatible scale if the window heights were reduced by moving the sills up and the headers down. The stringcourses across the front are essential ingredients to replicating the scale and rhythm of a rowhouse of this type, but wrapping them onto the south elevation—along with two window—is a distinctly contemporary detail. Historically a side wall like this, exposed on the front due to different setbacks, would have been rare, and where they are found they are unornamented and nearly windowless. In this case terminating the stringcourses after a one-foot return and removing the second-floor window would simplify the south elevation in a historic fashion and leave the front elevation the sole focus of the building.

The new garage, at 16 feet tall, would be taller than a typical one-car garage, but the Board has approved other tall garages on this alley.¹ The most successful versions are those that design the second floor as a roof form rather than wall. In that way the height of the first floor is more pronounced. Diminishing the height of the second floor or revising it into a roof form would improve its compatibility.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board find the concept design for a third floor and front bay addition to 1952 2nd Street NW and a new garage to be compatible with the character of the historic district, and delegate final review to Staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer

¹ 1946 2nd Street NW HPA 17-119, January 2017. 1936 2nd Street NW HPA 18-301, April 2018.